

# Catholic Theatre Conference

Official Publication

Catholic Theatre Conference

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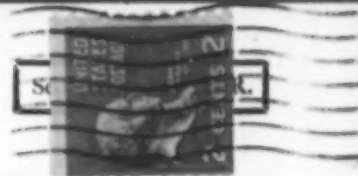
SEPTEMBER

No. 11

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## Welcome!

*With this issue, we "oldsters" stand aside and open our ranks to admit the high-school and college students now permitted membership in the C.T.C. through ruling of the Board at the June convention.*

For quite some time we have known that Drama students of both our high schools and colleges were eager and anxious to share with us in the interest, enthusiasm and effort of Catholic Theatre. We have been made strikingly and increasingly aware of their wish to become identified with the Conference in a very real and personal way. As a credit to their sense of values and their ideals and as an indication of another step forward for Catholic Theatre Conference, we mark September 1953 a red-letter date on our Conference calendar. Your personal membership, students, is also a credit to your directors and moderators who have brought you to the realization and appreciation of all that the Conference signifies. They now give you the opportunity to personally share in the stimulating and important work of Catholic Action through Catholic Theatre.

All organizations demand certain requisites for membership and the greater the prestige of joining, the greater the cost of initiation. Initiation into the Conference is not limited to the simple payment of a fee. It asks that you

1. acquaint yourself with the aims and ideals of the Conference.
2. ask yourself how you, personally, can help in this work of promoting good theatre.
3. ask your Director or Moderator to outline ideas and plans for active participation through the year.
4. co-ordinate your efforts with those of fellow-members in your own school.
5. promote activities in Drama with other schools of the area in an effort to acquaint all with the work of Catholic Theatre and to strengthen bonds.
6. live up to the ideals of the Conference by fostering, in every way possible, a deeper knowledge and appreciation of Catholic Theatre.

There is no reluctance or hesitation on our part as we open our ranks to permit you to enter. There is only the burning hope that you will enjoy and work for the Conference aims with the same deep satisfaction that has been ours alone for so long. You will better understand now why we have been so ardent and enthusiastic in this labour of love.

## Four Year Plan

Just as quickly as Labor day is checked off the calendar, every Drama director begins an examination of repertoire in an attempt to suit, with streamline effect, the figures of students whose present look is one of bulges and bumps of self-consciousness and amateur standing. The average director promptly starts by settling the problem of the first production and then relaxes, feeling that there is nothing more about which to worry until the curtain closes.

May we suggest that, as you think ahead, you do some long-range planning. The maxim of "one problem at a time" does not apply to theatrical production. That is the surest way to have troubles multiply. Reversely, the farther ahead you look and the more you anticipate and view the problems objectively, the better your chances of meeting and beating them. Don't then, just plan one program at a time or even just one year's program. Work on a four-year plan. I know,—even before you think it"—but there'll be so many upsets, so many changes and revisions—". That doesn't matter! The basic ideas behind your program will remain the same, help you toward definite goals, and give you a very real sense of security.

The programs from college departments that fill our files illustrate no great need for this caution. Most of them show taste and variety in selection of plays and give evidence of careful thought and foresight. The high school programs, however, indicate a frequent trend toward repetition. College directors know that unless students have had a "good taste of Drama" . . . or should we say a "taste of good Drama" . . . during their high school years, there is little likelihood of their registering for Drama at all when they come to college. Too many have had their love of Drama killed by monotony in play selection. Even more have never learned the love of the art—have had their potential aptitude and appreciation nipped in the bud—through failure on the part of the director to stimulate interest and healthful curiosity by careful play selection.

The program of plays should be planned then, so that those taking Drama for just a year or two will have an opportunity to participate in plays that help them to better understand the meaning and true aims of Drama, to better their appreciation for it, and to know what goes on behind the scenes of a theatrical production. Those who study for four years should receive a broader and deeper insight into the field and gain in personality development. It's true that in one year we can't do more than scratch the surface, but if we scratch in the right place and teach them how to continue scratching, the resultant good effect will continue long after that short year's work is over.

(Continued on Page 3)

## AN OPEN LETTER TO REGIONAL CHAIRMEN:

You are no doubt, knee-deep in plans by this time and perhaps these few ideas may be coming along just in time to claim credit for what's already been "thought out," developed, and perhaps even accomplished.

You've already heard from Sister Mary Olive (St. Mary-of-the-Woods College) who, as Executive Committee member in charge of Regional activity, has acquainted you with the aims set at the Board Meeting in Denver. You've probably held your first meeting with leaders of your area and by October, you will have sent Sister the names of co-chairmen, if you haven't already done so.

Each region, according to Sister's plan, will function more efficiently and successfully if a separate committee each is formed to handle the problems pertinent to children's theatre, high school, college and university, and little theatre and parish groups. The advantages of this division of labor are, of course, obvious.

During the next three months, at least two activities within the committee are strongly urged to insure progress. One in each semester is suggested. And of course you will want to appoint some one person or committee to handle the detail of the new student memberships. This work will be completely regional. The totals of these memberships must be sent to the Central office not later than September 30th. That is going to call for some fast and furious work in both promotion of the new plan and in keeping records. Student memberships that come in after September 30th must be reported before the 15th of each month in order to permit the Central office time to add copies of that month's supply of the Calendar.

Of course the really important purpose of this letter is to ask, "What is your Region going to do in the way of Drama activity during this year?" From time to time, we expect to publish in the Calendar an account of what is being done in each of the regions and what plans are under way. And when you come to the Executive meeting in Chicago during the Christmas holidays, we know you'll have a full report of what's already happened and what more is to come.

Of course it's all so easy to set it down on paper like this and plans are as exciting as their execution is difficult but you know all this only too well! You knew it before you accepted the office and in spite of it, you set out to offer of your experience, your effort, and your time. That's why this work is so truly Catho-

lic action. We choose to do it—and we choose to do it not for any personal gain, but for the common goal of all in the Conference and all those who can be reached through the Conference.

The membership of your region will respond wholeheartedly and make personal sacrifices in their assistance, if and when you make them see the far-reaching results of their interest and achievement.

Sister Mary Olive and we here at the Central office hope to receive a barrage of letters requesting help, and letters glowing with accounts of activity.

Our best wishes go with you for success as you start the year, and of course prayers that St. Genesius, cognizant of our limitations and difficulties, may step in and act for us when and if, on occasion, we fumble our roles.

Sincerely,  
Members of the Board

## PLAUDITS

From the earliest years of the organization the name of Mrs. Christopher Wyatt has been synonymous with interest, co-operation, and zeal for the success of the Catholic Theatre Conference. Her generosity has been boundless, extending itself far beyond the call of office. Her faith in the organization and her ability and effort in superceding every obstacle have been unflagging and matchless. It was natural therefore that the 1953 Convention chose to distinguish her by granting her an honorary life-time membership. It was a pleasure for the President to make that announcement her first piece of official correspondence. We know that the entire membership unanimously applauds this well-bestowed honor upon one who has endeared herself to all in the Catholic Theatre Conference.

## FILM STAR GUEST AT CONVENTION

One of the highlights of the C.T.C. Convention was the guest appearance of Paul Picerni, rising young Warner Brothers film star. Paul, as he became known to members of C.T.C. impressed everyone with his genuine warmth and sparkling personality as well as with his keen interest in Catholic Theatre. Paul Picerni was seen in House of Wax, Miracle of Fatima, and currently is featured in The Desert Song.

Gerald Sullivan, Drama  
Director St. Mel High School

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The Catholic Church, in all its activities, gives the lie to those who say that the age of miracles is over. The building of its schools, its churches, the maintenance of all, the steady progress despite the lack of endowment, is a daily miracle. And Catholic Theatre, functioning on a financial shoestring as it always has, is another of these testaments to faith. "The Miracle on 34th Street" made marquees throughout the country. "The Miracle of CTC" may never be emblazoned on theater billboards or marquees but the steady beam of Catholic Truth through Drama has flooded many minds and permeated, with a radiant glow, the hearts of thousands. God granting, and St. Genesius helping, the "Miracle of CTC" will play for more than just a few seasons—for many, many years!

To members of AETA:

AETA has sent out early notices requesting material for exhibit. CTC members, who are also members of AETA, should certainly be represented in this display. We'd like to know that there was both quality and quantity in this representation. Don't wait! Pull out those photos and get them ready for mailing now. And, of course, try to be there yourself! The afternoon of December 29 is being circled on our calendar as a luncheon date for all CTC members who attend. If possible, please let us know in advance that you are going.

Be seeing you, we hope!

## HAVE YOU READ . . .

DESIGN FOR MOVEMENT by Lynn Oxenford? Published by Theatre Arts Books 270 Madison Ave., New York, (2.75) it offers excellent study for the director who is working for coordination of body and grace in students. Ideas on stage grouping, on pictorial effect, on balance in line and movement are plentiful. There is nothing elementary about it and yet it is clearly and interestingly presented. The subject matter is treated with imagination, a cognizance of artistic effect, and stresses creative ability in achieving goals.

THE IDEA OF A THEATRE by Francis Fergusson, now offered in 75c paperback edition? It isn't easy reading but certainly stimulates thought and probably a good deal of argument, too. It would be interesting to receive some reactions to the publication by Princeton University Press.



## NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

Over a four-year program, the selection of plays should offer great variety—not just for variety's sake but rather, to widen their range and insight into Theatre and theatrical procedures through as many different types as possible. The students, both those who take Drama and those who are loyal auditors for their four years, should not be subjected to a repetition of the same type of play year after year. We've known schools where each Spring saw another version of "Sister Susie Steps Out". There are different names for it—"Katey's Capers" or "Bob Bounces In" etc. but they were essentially the same thing. Sometimes it's a musical that is repeated year after year, or it may be a very dramatic and "heavy" choice. Whatever it is or however well it's done, it's just "another" to the student-body and the audience. Directors who fall into this habit are either afraid to try other than the "sure-fire" production, or they are just lazy. We suspect the former is more frequently the fault, but unless we possess a little of the spirit of adventure, a little desire to experiment and accept new challenges, we might as well face the fact that we are "dramatically dead".

The four year program should certainly include drama, comedy, farce, fantasy, musical, and tragedy. It is impossible for students to have other than a distorted understanding of the art unless they've seen, understood and appreciated Drama in its many facets. They should be familiar with the unusual and symbolic characteristics of an Oriental play, the manners, wit and beauty of a Shakespearean play, the differences of a Period play (Victorian, Medieval, Colonial, etc.) the power of Greek tragedy, the significance of a morality play, and the prosaic but purposeful realism of a modern play. They should see different styles of presentation. Because of the many limitations, physical and otherwise, in so many high school departments, we recognize the difficulties that present themselves at this point but even in an experimental fashion students can become familiar with arena style as contrasted to the usual production behind the proscenium arch, or presentation "a-la-Thornton Wilder" with no props or scenery in contrast to the usual and realistic stage setting. Space staging, formalism, and stylistic presentation—all have their place in this program.

It sounds like an enormous and impossible job. It is—if you plan only from show to show. Not only is it difficult but it creates limitations in choice of material

that do not occur when foresight is used. How often we've heard the director say "I can't do this for my big Spring play because I just finished doing one that is similar for the assembly a few weeks ago." So a good production is tossed aside because of bad planning. The one-act could more easily have been shelved and a substitute found rather than try to find the three-act that is just right for all the demands of the yearly production. But if you plan on a four-year scale, you'll find that many problems can be solved at one time. Further, you can gear your classroom work to co-ordinate with the techniques and understanding needed for each new play.

To fit such a program into four years is not too difficult. To fit it to the requirements and aptitudes of each year's group is something of a problem, but most directors get a "feel" of each class—even freshmen—and can measure fairly well and far in advance what they'll be able to do and what will be good for them to do. Some changes and revisions will, of course, occur, but these will be the exception rather than the rule. And the feeling of having plans ready that far in advance is a wonderful one. Such a program will ready them for the college department which can then be geared to giving them a richer understanding of the art, greater ease and facility in technical operation, and mastery in techniques as they apply to the individual's self-improvement and dramatic aptitude. College directors too frequently find they must start with fundamental knowledge of the study of Drama instead of being able to go on to more advanced work.

It's a good deal like diving. The hardest part is believing that you can do it. Try it and you'll come up out of your sea of manuscripts and catalogs with head clear, eager and unafraid to swim out into deeper waters.

## YOUR HELP, PLEASE!

We have had a request from Sister Loyola, SSJ. for a copy of the play *HOW TO PROPOSE*. Do you perhaps know the name of the publisher or a director who may have a copy? We would appreciate response if you can help. It is this interservice among directors that not only benefits all but brings us closer together in aim and effort. ....

Summer Theatre goers saw DARYL GRIMES play leading roles in many of the dramas at East Eden Summer Theatre. Daryl is a graduate of ST. SCHOLASTICA'S, Chicago.

Joan Pat Schowalter, an Alvernia (Chicago) graduate and now a drama major at Rosary College, River Forest, spent the summer with the Peninsula Players at Fishcreek, Wisconsin.

Here's a quote from the Chicago Tribune Column "Tops Among Teens." "Jerry Garvey's acting career has been flying high ever since he debuted in a production of Harvey at St. Ignatius High School two years ago. Jerry played the part of Elwood Dowd's "sister" though the role was re-written for a man since St. Ignatius is an all-boys school. A member of the Loyola University Drama Dept. was in the audience opening night and when NBC contacted Loyola for a boy actor, Jerry was suggested for the part. Since then Jerry has had running parts on Hawkins Falls, Mary Marlin, and Those Endearing Young Charms. Since the early part of July, the young actor has played the teenaged son in The Bennetts, a new network TV presentation. In spite of his show business success to date, Jerry plans to make acting an avocation rather than a career.

A High School Drama Festival was held at Nazareth College, Kentucky in May. Best actress award was given to Cielo de Queredo who played the part of the Empress in "The Mystic Rose of Pilate's Daughter" presented by Nazareth Academy. Cielo, crippled by polio for many years, played the part seated on a throne. Her only movements were of head and arms, and yet she was completely convincing. The critic judge was as surprised as the audience when, upon calling her name to receive the award, she appeared on crutches.

Catherine Frey (Providence High School, Chicago) won a drama scholarship in the competition tryouts at Mundelein College.

Dorothy Biondi, Academy of our Lady, Chicago, attended the CTC Convention in Colorado. Dorothy will be a one woman publicity department for CTC when she enters Marquette University this fall. She won the scholarship to Marquette in last year's Chicago Drama Festival.

Jean Thornton, an Academy of Our Lady graduate, won second honors in the speech contest at Marquette University recently despite the fact that as a freshman she competed with seniors and juniors. Jean represented Mount Mary College.

## HIGH SCHOOL CATHOLIC THEATRE

### TEENS AND C.T.C.

Two teens started off for the Catholic Theatre Convention, sealed-in for the night on the "City of Denver" rolling away to a week of enchantment and adventure. There were many thrills in those glorious seven days. Denver proved to be a wonder city and so did Colorado Springs. We took the daring drive to Pike's Peak and got a snapshot there of the two of us pelting a snowball at each other on the 11th of June. Our base was Loretto Heights College, a 160 acre campus overlooking the Rockies; often we strolled across its beautiful lawns to slide in a bit tardy to some of the lectures by teachers and "pros". In transit, we were sometimes thrilled and sometimes awed to meet the important personages from the world of professional and educational Drama. The greatest thrill was the PAGEANT-DRAMA of Catholicism—a solemn Pontifical High Mass at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral; something happens to a guy when he participates in that super-drama; a guy feels proud to be a Catholic, proud in a different sort of way.

All teenagers are movie fans and a bit stage struck; even Pat and I delayed digging into a scrumptious banquet at the Cosmopolitan Hotel until we had dug out of our minds the name to fit the face of the handsome movie star at the speakers table. Paul Picerni, of course, the rising 3-D star. Later that same week we heard and saw Dennis King, Jr. of Broadway fame. Those guys have what it takes. How could a person holding a play script in his hand, standing behind a wooden music stand hold the attention and admiration of an audience of professionals and teens? Paul Picerni did that in his dramatic reading of "The Martyrdom of St. Genesius". So did Dennis King as he gave us a 1953 version of the story of "Little Red Riding Hood". Those were great moments and well worth the long crawl by rail from remote Fond du Lac in far away Wisconsin.

But there was something of an emptiness and a disappointment about the convention for the teeners. We felt lost because of the complete emphasis on professional and adult problems. Couldn't C.T.C. provide a session to help teens decide whether they really have something on the ball to give to Catholic Theatre? We wondered if there couldn't be a sort of "Major Bowes" for teens at these sessions—a talent scout who would be a sort of critic-judge as the kids competed by giving pantomimes, dramatic sketches or individual characterizations. Couldn't each university that had a drama department offer a scholarship for a boy or a girl meriting an award in these competitions? Couldn't a scholarship drive be conducted among Catholic stars of stage, screen, radio and TV for this purpose too?

On the whole we think C.T.C. is wonderful, but we should drive and pull to make it bigger. Let's have a big turnout of members in our high schools this fall—only \$1.50 membership fee, and for that amount you get the monthly newsletter of C.T.C. activities and a medal of St. Genesius; you are a member and can participate in the club activities in a big or small way. Let's shove C.T.C. through the front doors of our high schools, colleges, universities and community theatres over to our local radio stations and out to the district TV hookup. Let's make the dream of dreams come true for C.T.C.—Catholic talent, Catholic

stars, Catholic scripts, Catholic technical experts on Broadway, in Hollywood, on radio and on TV. The Catholic Theatre Conference can be Catholic action's great force.  
**LET'S MAKE IT THAT!**

Jack Kremer

St. Mary's Springs Academy  
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

### WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR HIGH SCHOOL BULLETIN TO INCLUDE?

Send suggestions and news items to:

Anna Helen Reuter  
1050 Ardmore Avenue  
Chicago 40, Illinois

### CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOLS

Let's hop on the private deluxe coach en route from Denver to Minneapolis and listen to the chit chat of the sixty midwest delegates as they return from the C.T.C. Convention. Jubilant travelers included four Sisters of St. Joseph, three Sisters of St. Benedict, one lay director from St. Paul, four mother chaperones and students from the Academy of the Holy Angels and St. Margaret's Academy in Minneapolis and St. Joseph Academy and Visitation Convent in St. Paul. Arranging the tour and accompanying the delegates was Ralph Barnes, City Passenger Agent for the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. Sister Charitas, C.S.J., of the Academy of the Holy Angels and chairman of the North Central Region, promoted and organized this extensive dramatic travel project early in the spring. All the delegates considered it a most enjoyable and worthwhile adventure as you'll learn from their comments:

"I enjoyed and benefited greatly from the various plays presented; I liked especially the evaluations which follows every production."—Mary Jo Cronin

"All the workshops were wonderfully interesting."  
—Karen Mullin

"The musicals were delightful. I'll never forget that outdoor theatre."—Susanne Karnstedt

"The demonstration by Theodore Fuchs of his new lighting units was intensely interesting."—Joyce Towey

"One of the very interesting people we met at this Convention was Blanford Jennings, president of the National Thespian organization. We Thespians felt much at home in his presence."—Georgia Polzin

Nancy Anderson

"We were very lucky to get to that Convention and I hope I will be able to make the next one. I'll be a senior then."—Nancy Black



## ORCHIDS TO OUR LIBRARIAN

Two years ago it was the decision of the Board members to move the library to Immaculate Heart College. It was a drastic change and the separation of library service from executive and secretarial service seemed a questionable move. Thanks to the generosity of the Sisters of Immaculate Heart College, who so generously offered the space needed, and thanks a hundred times over to Sister Mary Ruth for her efficient and smooth handling of the library service, the project has met with two years of steady and continued success. Few recognize the amount of work connected with such a project, the endless detail of answering the requests, checking lists, packaging, mailing, and keeping track of postage fees required—all this, added to the regular work of a librarian builds up to a huge job. But the central office has been made increasingly aware of Sister's efforts by the fact that the work here has been lightened to so great an extent. Appreciation for good service is frequently expressed in correspondence by our members, too.

As if all that were not sufficient, Sister and her committee of students made up a list of available manuscripts and published plays. Copies of this list were printed and mailed to members last year. Our very deep gratitude to Sister for the real yet unobtrusive role she is playing to further the aims of the conference.

If by chance, there are a few who did not receive the play list, will you advise the Central office and we'll see that a copy is forwarded.

We wish too, to say thanks to the many who thoughtfully include postage when requesting plays. This is not necessary for library service but, because postage fees add up to a startling figure per year, it all helps immensely. Most of all, it indicates a nice thoughtfulness on your part.

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## BROADWAY IN REVIEW

**CAN-CAN**—Not any more refined than the dance of the title. Disappointing music by Cole Porter. One authentic French touch is Lili.

**DIAL M FOR MURDER**—Maurice Evans and a clever cast in polished thriller.

**GUYS & DOLLS**—Prize musical based on Damon Runyon stories of Broadway gamblers.

**HAZEL FLAGG**—Helen Gallagher with her acrobatic comedy. Tom Mitchell and Jack Whiting in fast-paced musical. One modified strip-tease.

**ME AND JULIET**—Disappointing Rogers and Hammerstein product. Decent but dull.

**MY THREE ANGELS**—Funny French farce of French Guiana with Walter Slezak very engaging as one of the trio of obliging convicts.

**PICNIC**—Pulitzer Prize Play by William Inge. Study of four women upset by one young man. Very penetrating on the physical plane.

**PORGY & BESS**—Super revival of Gershwin's classic. Not to be missed.

**SOUTH PACIFIC**—At popular prices but just as good as ever.

**THE FIFTH SEASON**—Farce of the Garment District with plethora of models plus Yiddish comedian.

**THE KING AND I**—enjoys undiminished popularity.

**THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH**—Centered on adultery, it provides Tom Ewell with opportunity in what is almost a monologue and consequently, rather boring.

**WISH YOU WERE HERE**—Joshua Logan's musical of a Catskill Camp and boisterous campers.

**WONDERFUL TOWN**—Delightful musical version of "My Sister Eileen" with Rosalind Russell. Score by Bernstein. Sets by Raoul Pene du Bois.

**A NIGHT IN VENICE**—Enchanted Spectacle of a Strauss operetta at Jones Beach.

Mrs. Christopher Wyatt

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## MID-ATLANTIC REGION

The chairmanship of the Mid-Atlantic Region will be taken over by Miss Joan Thelluson of New York City, N.Y. She will replace Mrs. C. Wyatt, taking over the remaining year of her term as Regional Chairman. Mrs. Wyatt's work on the Executive Board and as Play-listing Chairman is claiming every free moment and we reluctantly but understandingly free her from this added task. She will however, work with Miss Thelluson as a co-chairman.

Miss Thelluson is Drama Editor of The Catholic news, and has been interested in Catholic Theatre. She brings a wealth of understanding and ability to the office. Her plans and ideas are outdone only by her eagerness and enthusiasm. We know that the Region will give fullest support to Miss Thelluson and wish her success and blessing as she starts the year's activities.

Specific offers of help would be greatly appreciated by her and can be addressed to her at 780 Riverside Drive, New York 32, N.Y. We are sometimes reluctant to ask people to serve on committees because, though we are aware of their ability, we are not always familiar with their programs. You will do CTC a great service then by indicating a desire to help. The Mid-Atlantic Region, always strong and extremely active, will respond with its usual generosity of effort, will, and spirit, we feel sure!

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## DAYTON BLACKFRIARS

Each month, with solemn regularity, our office receives the periodical called "Friarcracker" published by the Blackfriars Guild of Dayton, Ohio. The spirit, newsiness, and effort behind this publication is certainly to be commended. We can't help but feel that the achievement of this news-letter deserves a hearty round of applause. No wonder members of the Dayton Guild have so much verve and enjoy such success. We hope the "Friarcracker" continues for many, many years and that it will retain its effervescence and vigor always.

And congratulations to the new officers elected in July! May all the problems and vicissitudes of office keep you smilingly aware of the fact that success is born of just such trouble and sweat.

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## PARDON, PLEASE

Your Central Office apologizes for the fact that invoices for dues for the coming year incorrectly indicated that the time embraced was from July 1, 1953 to June 30, 1954. Some years ago, it was decided that the fiscal year would begin on September 30th and end on October 1st. This change was inaugurated because of the inconvenience of paying dues in June, the month that is occupied with examinations, graduations, and other close-of-the-year details. Your dues then, are not dues until October 1st and we sincerely apologize for the seeming rush and the presumption that you were in arrears.

## PLAY PRODUCTION WORK SHEET

**JEANNE D'ARC . . .** Play in script form.

Historical drama in four episodes and two choric interludes by Margaret Cleary Anderson.

For production rights: Mrs. V. G. Anderson, 1616 Idlewood Road, Glendale, California.

**CAST:** Eleven men, ten women, two children, verse-speaking choir, extras. Costumes of the 15th century.

**PRODUCTION:** The play is written in prose and verse. It contains a prologue and four episodes connected by two choric interludes performed by a verse-speaking choir that comments, points up present action, and foretells the new.

The play lends itself to a very simple or an elaborate production. The locale changes from Joan's girlhood home, to the council chamber of the Dauphin, to the balcony room of the ladies of the court, to the courtroom where Joan is tried. Because of the choric interludes by the verse choir, if done before the proscenium arch, scenes on the stage may be readily shifted, causing no waiting time and making the action continuous.

The verse-speaking chorus is most appealing when some type of identical movement is provided for it. As the lines are written, they lend themselves to that. The vision scene of St. Michael can be as simple or as beautiful as the director might wish. A chorus of angels appearing with him behind a scrim adds much to the scene.

**STORY:** Everyone is familiar with the story of Joan of Arc. Mrs. Anderson limits herself in her play to four episodes of action. Episode one deals with Joan as a young girl in Domremy with her little brother, sister, and friend; episode two, with Joan's plea to the statesmen for support in the battle of Orleans; episode three, with a colorful picture of the women at court who show their reactions

to the then popular Joan of Arc: episode four, with the trial and condemnation of Joan. This last scene is, perhaps, the most powerful in the entire play.

**EVALUATION:** The play is an excellent one for mixed casts in senior high school or college, but it could also be done easily with an all-girl cast.

The longer one works with this script, the more one treasures the beautiful poetic lines, figures of speech, and the descriptions in the play.

The play demands a forceful talented girl for the role of Joan, one who can project the growth of character from a country maid to that of a leader of a victorious French army.

One feature of the play that might be considered a flaw in the writing is that a number of the speeches of the various characters are lengthy and sometimes pointless. Especially is this true in the scene where Joan meets the Dauphin and his statesman. In this scene, also, historical references are made that sometimes puzzle the cast and the audience, references which do nothing for the forward action of the play.

In the women-of-the-court scene, Joan plays a scene alone where she has a speech several pages long. Judicious cutting by the director helps.

One caution to give a director of this play is to work for naturalness in speaking lines to avoid a tendency that the characters or verse choir might have to declaim their speeches.

The play is intensely interesting to an audience because of the great variety of characters and settings. A cast feels a sense of achievement after having mastered and presented this version of **JEANNE D'ARC**.

Compiled by Sister H. Michaela,  
O.S.B.

St. Boniface High School

Cold Spring  
Minnesota

## BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

The Drama department of Immaculate Heart College has lost no time in plunging into the year's activities and their start has been most appropriately planned by choosing the feast of St. Genesius, August 26th. A presentation of Gheon's "The Comedian" was given by Paul Picerni in the college library as a benefit for the C.T.C. Those of us who have heard Mr. Picerni in his impressive and effective reading of this play at the Denver convention know the pleasure that came to the Immaculate Heart college audience through this artistic presentation. He brings to the stage a virtuosity that mentally stimulates and emotionally thrills his auditors. Congratulations to I. H. college for such good taste in selection of program, of performer, and of occasion!

## SUMMER WORKSHOP

A very ambitious and successful course was held at Clarke College where nuns took part in the Play Production workshop while high school students attended the Theatre Institute. Practicability was the keyword and courses, conducted by Sister M. Xavier, B.V.M. and Mr. J. Syburg, speech instructor at the college, stressed this need throughout. Nuns and students worked together on the plays—students in acting, nuns on the technical production and direction.

The six weeks course called for a program each Monday and variety and range are obvious in the results listed below:

1st week: Four radio dramas over  
C L R K

2nd week: Book-in-hand plays:  
"Importance of being Earnest"  
"Career Angel" (cutting)

3rd week: One Act  
"While Breakfast Waited"  
(Same play done by several groups)

4th week: Arena style  
"Overtones"  
"Thursdays at Home"

5th week: Play Reading  
"Antigone"

6th week: Three act play  
"The Emperor's Nightingale"

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